OTTAWA LETTERS.

The Effect of American Railway Influences on Mr Blair.

Nothing Else Would Cause the Minister to Turn Back in His Tracks With Such Emphatic Rapidity.

Sir McKenzie Bowell's Sensible Reply to the Threats of J. Israel Tarte and Sons — The Government Redeems One Out of Its Twenty Anti-Election Promises.

OTTAWA, March 28.—In the report given the other day of the speech of Mr. Mills of Annapolis nothing was said about his reply to Mr. Fielding's denial of the promise about the flour duty. Mr. Bennett, when speaking, was interrupted. In the course of some cross-firing, Mr. Mills intimated that Mr. Fielding in Annapolis had condemned the duty on flour and promised that the liberals would take it off. Mr. Fielding said that he made no such promise. When it became Mr. Mills's turn to speak, he explained that in the first session of 1896 he learned that Mr. Fielding and Mr. Longley were holding a series of meetings in Annapolis. Mr. Fielding was then premier of Nova Scotia and Mr. Longley was attorney general. Mr. Mills says that when he heard of these meetings he arranged to have a shorthand writer attend them and procure a verbatim report of what they might say behind his back. It seems that he had an idea that these men would say something and deny it afterwards, so Mr. Mills procured a typewritten copy and brought it with him to Ottawa.

From this copy he read Mr. Fielding's declaration against the flour duty. "Supposing I have two barrels of flour before me, one from Ontario, the other from the States. The conservatives would say, buy the Ontario flour. We say, buy the Ontario flour if you want it, but the conservatives say, buy the Ontario flour whether you want it or not. . . . . Is it necessary for the good of society to interfere with your liberty with reference to the purchase of that Ontario flour? Surely you can be trusted to decide which of these two barrels of flour you want. Certainly if the Ontario flour suits you, you will buy it, and you do not need an act of parliament to make you do it, either. We, the liberal party, have confidence in you, and we say we think you have a good enough judgment to know which barrel of flour you want. But they say you are not capable to judge for yourself, and so we will pass an act of parliament and fine you 75 cents if you do not buy that flour. Free trade allows you to do that which you believe to be for your own interests in every matter which does not interfere with the liberty of your neighbor. Protection makes you buy something you would not buy if you were left to your own free will."

Mr. Mills holds that a declaration like this is equivalent to a promise that the liberal party would take the duty off flour when it got control of the affairs of Canada. If it does not mean such a promise with Mr. Fielding minister of finance and framer of the tariff, it was so understood in Annapolis, especially by those who believed in the sincerity of the speaker. How it affected the friends of Mr. Fielding was shown by Mr. Mills, who told this little story: There was a little child at Annapolis, whose father sat on the platform at one of the meetings. That child was saying its prayers one day and it said, "God bless papa, God bless mamma, and God bless Sir Wilfrid and make him a good man, for he is not doing as well as papa thought he would." Mr. Fielding now says that he only advocated the repeal of the flour duty as part of a general anti-protection tariff. This does not seem to help him much. It only shows that he has broken his pledges, not only in respect to flour, but in the whole range of tariff legislation.

The vote on Mr. Charlton's Sunday bill may be good or bad, according as one looks at it. But my valued friend Mr. McConnell of the Chronicle and Telegraph, is hardly justified in saying that most of the liberals voted with Mr. Charlton. It would have been equally exact and more fair if he had stated that 42 liberals voted for Maclean's motion to go back into committee. In the second vote taken on the motion of Mr. Charlton to restore the bill to the order paper, the liberals were divided in this way. For Mr. Charlton's motion, 42; against it 50. Those who voted with Mr. Charlton on this division included Mr. Blair, Sir Richard Cartwright, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Mulock and Mr. Sifton. Those who voted against him were Sir Henri Joly, Mr. Borden, Sir Louis Davies, Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Tarte. The members of the government are, therefore, on record as equally divided.

The disturbance in the liberal party, which has occasioned two caucuses and no end of wrangling, is not yet settled. Meanwhile it is interesting to note what Mr. Pacaud's paper, one of the government organs, says about it. The Soleil claims that the deputy ministers must go, as they are mostly tories and will not let the ministers do what they want to. The paper gives two instances of their impudence. One story relates that some member of parliament called upon Sir Richard at a club in Ottawa and began to discuss a question of patronage in the club parlor. A deputy minister, who was an officer of the club, came and remarked that politics could not be discussed there without violating the rules of the club, but that they could continue the discussion in the hall. Whether the discussion was carried on in a loud tone of voice does not appear, but the deputy minister who made the member acquainted with the rules of the club is marked by Mr. Pacaud for slaughter. The other case is that of a member who visited a minister and urged some change in the management of the department. He was informed by the minister that the change could not be effected because the deputy minister would not allow it. Both these instances were brought up in caucus the other day. One might suppose that the latter case was one for the dismissal of the minister and not of the deputy, for of course the deputies would do what the minister told them. The humor of the case was that the particular minister did hot want to make the change, and lacked the courage to take the responsibility of refusing.

Another interesting statement by the Soleil relates to the Intercolonial freight rates. Mr. Pacaud's paper says that the whole trouble with the freight rates is due to the fact that the tories have not been dismissed from the control of the Intercolonial. It declares that Mr. Blair will speedily make things right now that it is brought to his attention, but that the whole matter was engineered by tories for the express purpose of getting the liberals into trouble. Thus the amiable and bumptious Mr. Harris is snuffed out by the ministerial organ. It was always thought that Mr. Harris was the creation of Mr. Blair, but now it appears that he is a pure invention, or, as the venerable friend of Mrs. Gamp would observe, "there ain't no Mr. Harris."

It seems that the valued Telegraph newspaper is somewhat agitated over the suggestion in this correspondence that the senate will refuse to be stampeded by Mr. Tarte and his threats of senate reform. The Telegraph has discovered that one S. D. Scott has expressed the opinion that the senate cannot permanently remain as now constituted, and holds that he therefore ought not to say these things about Mr. Tarte's propaganda. Whether the constitution of the senate shall ever be changed is one question. Whether Mr. Tarte shall change it because certain reckless and corrupt transactions are not endorsed is another question. One may venture to hope that the senate will not fail to destroy Yukon deals and Drummond deals as fast as they come up, whether a reform takes place in the constitution or not. It is at least safe to say that the senate will never be reformed in such a way that a political brigand can hold it up after the style of a highwayman with a stage coach. S. D. S.

OTTAWA, March 29.—Mr. Schreiber was the principal witness in the Drummond railway committee yesterday, but Mr. Blair, who sat beside him, gave him valuable assistance. Mr. Powell's examination for the purpose of ascertaining on what grounds Mr. Schreiber computed the large increase of traffic by the purchase of the Drummond railway was rigid. It was noticed that whenever a perplexing question was submitted, or one in which the answer might be injurious to the government, Mr. Blair answered before Mr. Schreiber, and the deputy minister, as a rule, accepted the statement of his chief as his own. Perhaps it is not convenient for Mr. Blair's subordinates to do otherwise. But the minister has modified his tone since the previous meeting. Newspaper reports did him some good, and although he has not given up insinuating, he has for the present given up bullying.

Mr. Powell tried to get from the deputy minister the sources from which the increased traffic is expected. Beginning with local traffic, he asked from what directions it was proposed to be gathered. Mr. Schreiber thought some would be captured from the Canadian Pacific and some from boats. As to the traffic now coming from the St. Lawrence to lower province ports by water, Mr. Powell asked whether that part originating at Quebec or below would be captured any better with the help of this line. Of course Mr. Schreiber could not see that it would. Then as to traffic bound for the lower provinces and originating between Montreal and Quebec, it was gathered that the Drummonod railway could do no good, for it does not touch the river between Montreal and Quebec. Thirdly, as to traffic originating on the canals and other water routes west of Montreal and bound for the lower provinces, Mr. Schreiber was asked whether the government road stood a better chance to capture that from the boats at Montreal than at Quebec. Mr. Schreiber thought some additional trade from this source would be captured at Montreal. To reach that conclusion, one must suppose that goods coming by water eastward to Montreal will take the land route from Montreal to Quebec, rather than continue the water route. Of the reasonableness of this contention any one may judge. There remains the prospect that the government will capture a large part of the western trade bound for the maritime provinces and now coming by the C. P. R., which is shorter by 250 miles to St. John and by 85 miles to Halifax, with varying advantages between.

Turning to the traffic from western points to St. John or Halifax for export, Mr. Schreiber did not give much encouragement to the government. From Montreal to Halifax is 848 miles. If any export business is to be done, it must compete with export trade from Montreal to Portland, which is 297 miles, or from Montreal to St. John, which is 487 miles. The export rate is based upon the shorter distance of 297 miles, and every other haul must be made on the same basis. The C. P. R. haul freight some 200 miles for nothing in order to divert business from Portland to St. John, receiving part of the compensation in the advantage of subsidized steamers. But the Intercolonial will have to haul 551 miles for nothing on the same basis. Now, 200 miles for nothing may not be very much in a C. P. R. haul of say 2,000 miles, but 551 miles for nothing is a good deal in a haul of 848 miles. This was the problem which Mr. Schreiber was called upon to discuss. The examination ran like this:

Do you see any chance of capturing the foreign trade under these conditions? Ans.—It would be much against us.

Don't you think it would be impossible unless you did business at a loss? A.—It would be very difficult.

Does not the traffic take the shortest route? A.—It takes the cheapest route.

Even with the assistance of Mr. Blair, Mr. Schreiber declined to be hopeful. Mr. Schreiber said that the main business they expected would be built up at Halifax and would be in consequence of the fast line of steamships. In fact this fast line appeared to be his only reliance. Mr. Blair asked whether he did not think an aggressive policy would assist, and Mr. Schreiber, of course, said it would. Mr. Blair asked, "You don't dispair, then, that Halifax may become a port for through traffic?" and Mr. Schreiber did not dispair. Mr. Blair asked if the railway did not expect to get some assistance from the Parry Sound branch, and Mr. Schreiber assented. Mr. Blair asked if the growth and progress of the country would not tend to increase business, and Mr. Schreiber assented. Mr. Blair inquired whether something would not be gained by the shorter distance from Halifax to England, and Mr. Schreiber assented. Mr. Blair wanted to know whether the Intercolonial would not have some advantage from the fact that it did not have to pay dividends like the Grand Trunk and C. P. R., and Mr. Schreiber assented. Afterwards to Mr. Powell and Mr. Borden, Mr. Schreiber said that the Intercolonial had never cut rates below the roads that paid dividends in through traffic, but had made equal rates, which meant lower rates on the basis of mileage. He also admitted that the Intercolonial was not holding its own, but was losing through traffic. From first to last, as was shown by the examination, the whole possibility of increased trade seemed to depend upon the through fast line of steamships at Halifax, and even then involved doing business at a loss.

It was gathered from Mr. Schreiber that it would require $62,500 to equip the Drummond railway with rolling stock. This item is of some interest, because the cost of the road, as stated by Mr. Greenshields, included the rolling stock, and the rolling stock is not sold to the government, but remained with the company. Therefore, the amount must be deducted from the value of the road.

Mr. Archibald's examination dealt with the character of the Intercolonial and that of the Drummond railway, as far as the latter could be ascertained. The witness gave a clear account of what the standard of the Intercolonial was as to the width of road, height of track, ballast, ties, culverts, bridges, fencing, buildings and equipment. He explained in what particulars, as far as he could ascertain, the Drummond railway fell short. Mr. Blair put on the sardonic mood in cross-questioning. He asked Mr. Archibald if he were not disposed to testify in such a way as to make the Drummond road appear as bad as he could, and was informed that Mr. Archibald was chiefly concerned to tell the truth. He cross-examined Mr. Archibald about sleepers, and got very much twisted up himself. He faced the witness with a statement of Mr. MacLeod, the government engineer, who approved the Drummond railway, and Mr. Archibald observed that he considered himself a much better judge of such matters than Mr. MacLeod, seeing that Mr. MacLeod had little experience, and he had a great deal.

For eight hours yesterday, the senators pounded away at the Yukon discussion. Mr. Power went over the matter in his usual careful style. He was painstaking and argumentative, though lacking somewhat in force. Mr. Lougheed maintained that the proposed railway would be of little use to the Canadian trade. The senator comes from Calgary and is in favor of the inland route. Senator Dandurand, one of Sir Wilfrid's appointments, spoke for two hours in support of the scheme, intimating that all the senators on the other side were taking a partizan view of the case. Senators Scott, Power and the other old-time grits, listened painfully while their new colleagues told them that it was not proper for the senate to oppose or condemn or destroy a government measure. He commended the eighteen years' conduct of that body in always accepting the decision of the government in the other house on large matters. He forgot the Harvey-Salisbury bill. He also forgot that on a dozen occasions or more his leader in the senate had moved the six months' hoist and had tried his best to defeat government measures. So he went on with perfect complacency, attacking the secretary of state, but apparently doing it in ignorance.

In the other house there was a whole day's discussion on a private bill. The Rainy River Railway project has been described before. A company seeks a charter to build from the Lake Superior towards Winnipeg, the assumption being that it will be a rival line some day with the Canadian Pacific. "Billy" Maclean, so called, is determined that this line shall not form a pool with the C. P. R. He wants competitive rates, and tried to get a clause in giving the government power to supervise the freight and passenger rate on the road. He also tried to make a statutory 2 cent passenger rate. Several members supported him, and at the end he was able to muster 16 votes. Before this was reached Mr. Blair explained that Mr. Maclean was a thorn in his side. He had talked about the railway monopoly in the house on two occasions. He had gone over it all again in the railway committee, and now for the fourth time was stating his programme. The minister of railways holds that the Toronto editor doesn't care about the Northwest, but is only trying to make himself famous. He hurled sneers and scornful remarks across the house until Mr. Maclean began to see that in an attempt to make himself famous he had the able assistance of the minister of railways. Brother Maclean is not easily suppressed. He admits that he has declared at considerable length four or five times against railway monopoly and demanded public control of railway rates, and he has the hardihood to say that he will do it several times more.

The speaker has been taking the advice of the house on the question of procedure. It is usual when a bill is reported from committee for the speaker to receive the report and then ask: "When shall this bill be read a third time?" Commonly the reading takes place at a later day, but often somebody calls out "now," and if there are no objections the third reading takes place at once. Yesterday before the Rainy River bill escaped from Mr. Maclean and the committee, Mr. Maclean announced that when the third reading was called he intended to divide the house on his amendment, expecting that it would be a later day. When the speaker put the usual question some members called "now" and some "tomorrow." The speaker put it to vote, declining to hear discussion as to the propriety of deferring the reading. This was the first time in the history of the house of commons that a vote had been taken on the question of the date of a third reading. Some members objected on the ground that unanimous consent was required in order that the reading should take place the same day as the previous stage. But these points were taken afterwards, for the speaker would not hear argument until after he had called in the members and taken the vote and decided that the third reading should take place immediately. After dinner he condescended to listen to a discussion of the question of procedure, and told the members that he was much obliged for their views, and would by and by inform them what conclusions he had reached. Several of the members contended that the question even if it might be put was debatable. Sir Wilfrid could not see it in this light, but Sir Louis Davies did not agree with him, and the speaker himself informed the house that he did not shut off debate because it was not allowable, but because he could not wait too long for the debate to begin. The members of the house who had jumped up in their seats as quickly as they could when the question was put, and had tried to begin, laughed good naturedly at the method which Mr. Edgar took to let himself down. It is not right, according to Mr. Edgar's idea, for a speaker to admit that he has done wrong, but he came as near it as could be expected. Meanwhile, as the premier had pressed the motion and Mr. Speaker had helped him through, there was no harm in reconsidering the point late in the spring. Mr. Speaker Edgar is a very decided partizan.

Last night Mr. Fielding said a funny thing. The members expected the budget speech on Friday. Mr. Fielding stated that the members had drawn this "inference" from a remark of the premier. It was a wrong impression. The date was next Tuesday. Naturally the members and newspaper men who were responsible for the wrong "inference" from Sir Wilfrid's remarks, turned up the Hansard to see how they had obtained the false impression. This is what they found:

"Next Thursday I think will be Holy "Thursday. Practically that will "mean that we take Thursday until "Easter, but in the meantime we will "have the budget speech next Friday "and proceed with it from day to day "until completed."

So the members made the mistake of inferring that the speech would come on Friday from the fact that the prime minister said it would come on Friday. Mr. Fielding was, no doubt, quite right in suggesting that this was a poor basis for the inference. The house, having regard to Sir Wilfrid's record, ought to have inferred when he announced the speech for Friday that it would have been delivered on some other day. It is not often now that the members make such a mistake.

The important features in the estimates have already been printed in your paper. It is interesting, however, to note that the expenditure keeps climbing up. We will have the usual supplementaries, but at this stage we can only compare the main estimates of this year with the main estimates of last year. The main estimates this year call for $39,125,879. Those of last year were $38,111,663. This is a clear jump of over a million, and if the finance minister keeps on he will have a million and a half or so added to the expenditure, which has already passed the outlay of the previous government.

The matter which will perhaps strike most painfully the largest number of people is the reduction in the Savings Bank interest. Last year the rate was reduced from three and a half per cent. to 3 per cent. Now we have another cut to two and a half per cent. When Mr. Fielding borrows money abroad he sells two and a half per cent. bonds at about 7 below par. When he borrows from the laboring men and other Canadians who have small savings he negotiates on a par basis. They get only the bare two and a half per cent., which is the smallest rate paid to any creditor. Under the late government a better principle was adopted. The Savings Bank depositors got always a little larger interest than was paid to the banks or the large investors. The change is made at the insistence of the banks, who of course cannot get deposits at lower rates than the government. Their policy is to crowd down the Savings Bank rates as far as possible, so that they can reduce their own borrowing rate. Now that Senator Cox, the president of the Bank of Commerce, the hero of the Crow's Nest deal and the favored Yukon banker, has become a consulting member of the government, the banks have obtained this additional concession at the expense of the poor depositor in the government savings bank. It means a reduction of $225,000 in the amount which these depositors will receive every year. S. D. S.

OTTAWA, March 30.—If Mr. Ross Robertson had not given the benefit of the doubt to the proposed franchise law, and Mr. Poupore had not been an alternate voter, the second reading of the franchise bill would have passed by a straight party majority, but the member for Toronto is opposed to both the old and the new bill. He voted against the amendment because he could not see how its principles could be carried out without the appointment of a revising officer, and he has a dislike to revising officers. Mr. Poupore voted last year in favor of the Drummond Railway bill. This year he was against the Yukon deal. Therefore by the law of averages he had to vote for the government in the franchise division. Mr. Poupore is a genial and pleasant contractor, who averages his votes with great mathematical precision.

The last day's discussion was of an interesting character. The speeches were short and pointed, and as a rule free from offensive reflections. The way of the government was made easy by the fact that very few members of the house are satisfied with the old system. The conservatives, and probably a good many liberals, would prefer federal to provincial control, but as no scheme of federal control which provided a simple and easy franchise system, was before the house, no satisfactory alternative was presented. The opposition did not vote for the maintenance in detail of the present law. Mr. Powell's amendment embodied a principle which no doubt the next government and the next parliament will put into operation. When a system on that basis is presented it will probably receive the assent of the house more cordially than the government's measure does.

For it is not claimed that the scheme for the proposed franchise is broad, national, or logical. It is sectional, petty and provincial, suitable to the provincial minds who compose the present ministry. But it can never satisfy the minds of a strong federal party, nor of any broad minded public man. Canada is not a collection of scattered provinces working together for some special purposes. It is a nation with national ideas and aspirations. In the long run it will never retain organization on the basis of provincial control of the federal electorate. Such at least is the view of the leader of the opposition and of those on his side of the house, including the two members who are put down as supporters of the franchise bill. Such is the view expressed by Mr. Powell's amendment and by the speech with which it was introduced. Mr. Powell, Mr. McNeill and Mr. Davin showed that the United States had from the first admitted the principle of central control, and though for the time the supervision was passed over to the States, the control of congress may be enforced at any moment.

While the old franchise measure is admittedly too complicated, there is no admission that it is unfair. Two or three government members made the claim that the franchise bill was an engine to keep one party in power. The answer to that is that the party in opposition desires to retain a system of federal control, notwithstanding the change of government. Mr. Casey reproached the opposition for this. He said he could not see why the conservatives wanted to leave the lists in the control of the liberal party. Mr. Casey apparently could not rise to the comprehension of a body of men adhering to a principle in spite of a change of government. He has no such example in his own party. But the opposition know the present system to be perfectly fair. An illustration of this is afforded by Mr. Clancy, who stated that in one district the revising officer was a judge of strong liberal sympathies. The conservatives had opposed his appointment, but Sir John Macdonald told them that he would be found a fair man, and they were afterwards led to admit that Sir John was right.

The occasion of passing the second reading of this bill is memorable in the history of this administration. It should be set down in crimson letters in the record of this government that one pledge has been partly carried out. During the two years that ministers have been in office, this was the first part of their programme that they have touched without breaking it. Let this measure stand in the books as the one act out of twenty which is not the record of a falsehood. In dealing with the bill, the senate will probably take this into consideration.

The minister of railways has clouded all the minds of his followers with a new set of doubts. He is the most confusing and perplexing man of this generation. Yesterday he spoke with energy and almost with violence in the big railway committee in favor of Mr. Corbin's charter for the Kettle River railway. This railway is opposed on the ground that it will tap the Kootenay district and deliver to the United States the trade and the smelting business which belongs to this country. The Canadian Pacific people want the business, and are building with infinite labor and large expense, a railway through the passes and across the rivers of the Kootenay into this country. Mr. Blair was an uncertain quantity until he spoke. When he did speak he went into extremes. He told the committee that this was a most valuable country, and would soon contain from 30,000 to 50,000 people—not in the whole Kootenay, but the Boundary district alone. Perhaps no district in Canada, said Mr. Blair, is so rich. For the moment the Yukon region, which he described so eloquently two or three weeks ago, was forgotten.

The minister of railways was shocked at the idea that competition should be refused to these people. He called it a "novel proposition." More than that, it was a "startling proposal." The Canadian traditions were all opposed to giving exclusive control of any part of Canada to Canadian railways. He dwelt upon the advantages of competition and declared that the government control of rates on the C. P. R. was so limited that he had no faith in its effectiveness as compared with his reliance on competing lines. Mr. Blair spoke scornfully of the alleged danger of losing the trade to the United States. He indignantly repudiated the idea that Canada could not compete in trade with any country. So he went on, his language increasing in intensity until the committee, especially the strangers in it, began to think that he must be serious.

Mr. Maxwell, as a Presbyterian divine, has recollections of the class in logic. He suggested if the minister would kindly allow him to interrupt, that Mr. Blair might, for the benefit of a puzzled juryman, harmonize his remarks with those he made last year on the Kootenay question. He also observed that as Mr. Blair seemed now so anxious to invite American competition, he might point out how the change had come over him since the discussion of the Yukon bill. Mr. McInnes, another energetic liberal, seconded the inquiry. Mr. Blair declined to explain to his confused supporters. He was equally uncommunicative to Mr. Davin when he raised the same question in the house two hours later.

The cause of this perplexity will be understood when we turn to Mr. Blair's speech at the time that he introduced his Crow's Nest Railway policy last year. It is not a year since the country voted $4,000,000 to carry the Canadian Pacific railway system into the Kootenay. The house of commons thought it was voting for a measure which would give Canadian trade and Canadian industries the control of this country. It was on this pretence that the members were asked to vote the money, as will be seen by Mr. Blair's remarks at the time.

After describing the great natural wealth of this same boundary country Mr. Blair said: "It seems to me to be a serious question whether it is not the duty of parliament to lend every possible aid without delay in order that we may come into possession, so far as possible the exclusive possession, of this valuable territory. Because this committee must not lose sight of the fact that this important section of country lies immediately adjacent to the boundary of the United States. It is not very far from the extensive line of railway. It will not take many miles of railway to be built in order to penetrate into the Boundary Creek section. Now people to the south of us are liable to do in respect to that boundary country what they have almost done in respect to the Kootenay district. They are liable, by building a section of railway into that country, to get possession of the trade and are liable to divert trade from our own country from the east and from the coast, and to carry it over the line. To my own personal knowledge they have been doing that with respect to the Kootenay. It is a fact which only requires to be known to make a grave impression on the minds of the house that the people of the state of Washington, knowing the advantages of possessing in British Columbia the valuable minerals which are there undeveloped, built up a railway into the Kootenay country and got possession of the business and trade of the country. They built up Spokane out of business from British Columbia. Spokane is a city of 35,000 people, and was a few years ago only 7 or 8,000. Its growth has been due to the development of British Columbia. It is a matter for consideration whether we will take that trade."

So much from the Mr. Blair of last year. This year he is not asking for exclusive possession for Canada but ridiculing and scorning the idea. He got his Crow's Nest railway vote, but since then has met Mr. Corbin, who represents the aggressive people of the state of Washington. It was this Mr. Corbin who built the other line into the Kootenay. It was he who more than any one else built up Spokane out of British Columbia trade. It is he who is now projecting his line into the Boundary district and who has other possible Spokanes in sight. Now Mr. Blair is at his back. No wonder that Mr. Maxwell, humble supporter as he has been of Mr. Blair, is confused and paralyzed.

But the other reason is given that the Canadian Pacific, which has been paid so much Canadian money as an inducement to go into the Kootenay, is able to impose excessive rates on the people there, and thus prevent the development of the country. The minister assures the committee that he cannot control the company and the only way to do so is to take in another company. Is this the end of the boasting we had last year that the Crow's Nest contract gave the government absolute control over the British Columbia rates as well as the Northwest rates of this great railway? It was then pointed out that while Mr. Blair had given the company $2,000,000 more than the late government propcsed for the same service they had got more than an equivalent in the absolute control of the rates. Here is the minister himself ten months afterwards, before the Crow's Nest road is built, volunteering the state-

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